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ABSTRACT

This book reviews the history of university education in Sri Lanka, paying special attention to the University of Peradeniya, originally the University of Ceylon. The book focuses on how an institution of higher learning, modeled initially on the older universities of Britain, has been influenced by the challenges and constraints of continuing resource scarcity, rapid social change, political instability and weaknesses of governance in an ex-colonial third world setting. Written at a time when the university was celebrating its 15th anniversary, the book also serves as an appraisal of the achievements and failures of the university, and of its contribution to the public life of Sri Lanka. The first five chapters provide a critical review of the evolution of university education in Sri Lanka, are by K. M. de Silva and are titled: "The Early Years and the University College"; "The Creation of the University of Ceylon"; "The University of Ceylon: 1955-78"; "The University of Peradeniya, 1978-87: A Decade of Mixed Fortunes"; "The University of Peradeniya, 1987-94: From Deep Crisis to Modest Recovery." The next eight chapters examine specific fields at Peradeniya: "Agriculture and Veterinary Education" (M. Wijaya and A. P. Jayatilake); "Perspectives on Dental Education at Peradeniya" (Asoka Ekanayake); "The Faculty of Law at Peradeniya 1947-66 and at Colombo from 1966" (N. Tiruchelvam); "Faculties of Arts and Oriental Studies at Peradeniya" (G. H. Peiris); "The Peradeniya Contribution to Literature, Theatre and the Arts" (K. N. O. Dharmadasa); "The Faculty of Science at the University in Peradeniya" (S. A. Kulasooriya); "The Faculty of Engineering" (D. L. O. Mendis); "The Faculty of Medicine" (S. N. Arseculeratne). The following chapter

discusses Peradeniya University in times of unrest in "The Campus Community at Peradeniya: Travails of a Residential University" (G. H. Peiris). The following four chapters address university governance: "The Question of Governance" (K. M. de Silva); "University Autonomy: Precept and Practice" (W. M. A. Wijeratna Banda); "University Governance: The Vice-Chancellor's Role--A Personal Note" (B. L. Panditharatne); and "University Governance: The Secretariats" (W. M. A. Wijeratna Banda). A final chapter offers conclusions on the outlook for higher education in Sri Lanka and is by K. M. de Silva. (Individual chapters contain reference notes.) (JPB)

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